

## RECOMMENDATIONS and RESPONSES

### **Recommendation #1**

Continue efforts to increase FSP involvement in FSNE. Areas that generally benefit from more state agency participation include:

- a. Strengthening the link between FSP and FSNE at both the state and local office levels (e.g. referrals, trainings, etc.);
- b. Assisting state contractors with providing needs assessment and targeting data specific to the food stamp population;
- c. Streamlining and consolidating the annual State FSNE Plan;
- d. Assisting state contractors with recruiting partner organizations;
- e. Establishing consistency and fostering collaboration among FSNE Implementing Agencies;
- f. Representing FSP on nutrition-related committees and coalitions and representing FSNE among various welfare-related groups.

**CDHS Response #1:** The Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section (CPNS) agrees to work with staff to place a greater emphasis on the Food Stamp Program (FSP) involvement in state and local level functions/activities. At a regional level, CPNS will incorporate FSP topics and priorities. They will also work with Regional Nutrition Network (RNN) staff (11 regions) to place a greater emphasis on FSP involvement at regional workshops and conferences. Training priorities will include FSP targeting data, referral systems, collaboration with local food stamp offices, and recruitment of FSP partner organizations.

CPNS staff will enhance online resources to local contractors and partners and will also work with state-level agencies i.e., California Department of Social Services (CDSS), University of California, Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Program, Interagency Food Assistance Committee (IFAC), State Nutrition Action Plan Partners (SNAP), California Association of Nutrition Activity providers (CAN-Act), RNNs, Food Assistance and Nutrition Education Outreach (FAN-Out), Joint Steering Committees, state coalitions) to ensure representation of FSP related issues on key state-level functions.

CPNS recently reviewed United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Western Regional Office (WRO) comments (157 questions) to the federal fiscal year (FFY) '07 State FSNE Plan and will incorporate the recommendations into the development of the FFY '08 Funding Application Packet (FAP) scheduled for release in January/February 2007. CPNS will share the FFY '08 online application to USDA WRO prior to release. Furthermore, CPNS will provide additional trainings on the web-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software for other local agency contractors. The GIS software (presently located on CPNS' website) provides regularly updated information on eligible census

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tracts and local resources available for targeting FSP. Based on USDA WRO's recommendations, CPNS will enhance the web links for local contractors to provide current targeting data (by county, eligible census tracts, ethnicity, etc.) and resources. CPNS will also review targeting data from local contractors during site visits and through a new Grant Information and Fiscal Tracking System (GIFTS) database on a quarterly basis to identify needs and gaps and develop resources accordingly.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #1. CDSS continues to support efforts to increase FSP involvement as staffing allows. However, as FSNE is optional there is no mandate for County Welfare Departments (CWDs) to participate. During the past year Food Stamp Bureau staff has presented information on FSNE to the California Welfare Directors' Association (CWDA) Food Stamp Committee at almost every meeting. CDSS will continue to use the Committee as a means of encouraging and soliciting CWD involvement in FSNE. This is in addition to a commitment to issue county informational notices and use our direct lines of communication with CWDs as appropriate.

Regarding the remaining suggestions, our efforts will continue to consolidate/streamline the State Plan and actively participate in FSNE partnerships like SNAP. We have been and will continue to be an active FSNE partner.

**Recommendation #2**

To facilitate the ability of local social services staff to refer FSP clients to nutrition education resources, work with California Nutrition Network (CNN) and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) to develop a statewide, county-by-county database of local FSNE programs and materials.

**CDHS Response #2:** CPNS will work with state and local social services staff to facilitate referral of FSP clients to nutrition education resources. Currently, we are assembling the *California Nutrition Network (Network) 2006-07 Network Project Directory*, a compilation derived from the *Network Contractor Project Summary*. The Directory contains contact information for RNNs and extensive information about each contractor carrying out FSNE, including contact information, target audience, setting where the contractor works, and a description of the project. It will be one component of the county-by-county program information. University of California, Davis (UCD) FSNE programs will compile similar information. The UCD website <http://ucanr.org/ce.cfm> permits the user to select a county and, if youth or adult FSNE programs are available, it provides contract information and program description.

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Two new components are planned: the *Network* nutrition education materials clearinghouse website and the regional *Network* Physical Activity Resource Directories. The public materials website will make available leading brochures and other materials developed by the *Network* for a minimal cost recovery fee. The *Network* Physical Activity Resource Directories describe low-cost and free physical activities for each region. These are broken down by county and/or by activity. Several are already posted on websites. We plan to post other information later this FFY. The new website and the *Network* Physical Activity Resource Directories will be readily available. While some nutrition materials may be county-specific, many will be appropriate for all counties.

Some of the materials described above are currently issued as .pdfs; others as databases, and others as web pages. The most appropriate method(s) for sharing the information with social services staff will be determined collaboratively among CDSS, CPNS, and UCD, with input from local social services staff.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #2 and will assist with the dissemination of information to CWDs.

**Recommendation #3**

Explore approaches to help address increased workload of CNN staff and improve the depth of contract oversight. Strategies may entail:

- a. Pulling specific functions that would benefit from specialization and designate staff teams that focus only on these areas (e.g., a site visit team that is solely responsible for conducting local program/fiscal site visits, with Program/Contract Managers participating on a voluntary basis; a team responsible for providing operational trainings to State, Regional Nutrition Network (RNN) and local FSNE staff).
- b. Reallocating federal share dollars to hire additional staff to either allow for more equitable coverage of contracts or to take over some of the peripheral projects that can sometimes sidetrack staff.
- c. Staggering contracts so that different Program and Contract Managers are better able to coordinate internal reviews and negotiations; or pairing Program Managers with the same Contract Managers for a given set of contracts so that communication, priority contracts and timelines can be streamlined.
- d. Establishing a more formal mentoring process or training for staff members, in order to orient them to FSNE principles and their respective role within CNN, as well as ensure consistent and accurate application of FSNE policies.

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**CDHS Response #3:** CPNS strongly agrees that additional staff are needed to address the increasing workload of CNN staff, improve the depth of contract oversight, and maintain a high level of customer service to our partner agencies.

**Response #3a:** CPNS already has some teams of Contract and Program Managers that only deal with specific types of contracts, i.e., faith-based, *RNN*, non-profit Incentive Award, and Local Food and Nutrition Education contracts. For local incentive awardees (LIAs), we have found that geographic assignments facilitate coordination among channels. With additional staff, we anticipate being able to provide more time for channel-specific program leads to specialize within the larger channels.

**Response #3b:** CPNS will work with the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) Personnel Branch and the Public Health Institute to recruit and fill vacancies faster. CPNS proposes adding ten additional state positions (technical, analytical, and support) to address the corrective action items and recommendations in USDA's "California Food Stamp Nutrition Education Administrative Review Final Report" (Administrative Review Report). CDHS reviewed the FFY 07 budget and will submit a FSNE State Plan amendment to reallocate approved federal share dollars to cover the cost of ten additional positions. The ten new CPNS state positions will perform the following functions:

Function	#	Classification	Function
Program Compliance Review Team (PCRT)	4	Health Program Manager I Public Health Auditor IV Associate Health Program Advisor Office Technician Health Education Consultant III -redirected from within CPNS	Create a five-member team to conduct biennial local agency contractor fiscal and administrative compliance reviews. See response to Corrective Action #1 for additional information
Program Managers for Community Development Unit	3	Public Health Nutrition Consultant III Health Education Consultant III Associate Health Program Advisor	Create more equitable allocation of contracts per staff (1:10) to increase contract oversight, technical assistance, follow-up to PERT reviews, and develop policy guidance
Trainings	1	Public Health Nutrition Consultant II	Plan, organize and conduct additional local agency contractor training sessions
Support	2	Management Service Technician	Assist Community Development and Training Units' professional staff compile status report findings, develop and interpret policy guidance, and plan training events

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**Response #3c:** Due to state contracting procedures, it is not realistic to stagger the contracts to different times of the year. Program and Contract Managers are paired, when feasible, to coordinate internal review and negotiations. LIA contracts are assigned to Program Managers geographically from within a regional area. This allows a Program Manager to have a comprehensive view of regional activities and facilitate collaboration and partnerships. We will explore team reassignments as part of a larger effort to increase efficiency, coordinating CPNS and communications at the state level.

**Response #3d:** CPNS currently assigns mentors to new staff; who may be either their supervisor or an experienced co-worker. Supervisors monitor the work quality of new staff and provide training as necessary. CPNS currently conducts annual new staff orientations to introduce staff to *Network*, goals and objectives of the annual State FSNE Plan and introduce them to other units.

CPNS will consider offering this orientation training more frequently as new staff is hired, i.e. with every 15 newly hired staff or at least once every four months, whichever comes first. Contract and Program Managers have semi-monthly meetings that provide training and information sharing.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #3 and supports the submission of a Plan Amendment to request reallocation of approved FFP.

**Recommendation #4**

Within the confines of California Department of Health Services (CDHS) and Public Health Institute (PHI) infrastructure, explore the possibility of incorporating opportunities for career growth in CNN (e.g. , more team leader positions, “manager-in-training” programs).

**CDHS Response #4:** As USDA noted, CPNS’ organizational chart is relatively flat. There are four state management/supervisory positions responsible for the 123 authorized state and PHI positions. The addition of more managers and supervisors is warranted to implement the corrective actions called for in the Administrative Review Report. With the passage of Senate Bill 162, effective July 1, 2007, CDHS will be dividing into two separate departments, the new Department of Public Health and the renamed Department of Health Care Services. CDHS will evaluate CPNS’ organizational structure and career growth opportunities as part of the larger reorganization process.

CPNS and Public Health Institute (PHI) offer a wide range of in-house and commercial training opportunities, including basic supervision, program management, analytic processes, and communications. Employees complete Individual Development Plans annually. With additional staff to handle growing workload, as above, employees will be better able and encouraged to attend

needed training. Additionally, PHI recently conducted a review of position title and pay. Several position series used within CPNS were authorized for movement and upward mobility.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #4 and recognizes that patience will be needed during the upcoming time of transition as CDHS is reorganized.

**Recommendation #5**

Develop procedures for improving communication between CNN units with regard to system and program best practices, current activities and opportunities for cross-unit collaborations.

**CDHS Response #5:** CPNS agrees with this recommendation to work on and develop procedures for improving communication between *Network* units with regard to system and program best practices, operational efficiency and consistency, current activities, and opportunities for cross-unit collaborations. Beginning in FFY 07, in addition to existing training events, CPNS will add the key program developments (system enhancements), and best practices to senior staff meetings and monthly program/contract managers to facilitate cross-unit communication. To the extent beyond CPNS state staff, CPNS will share similar standardized agenda items at RNN (see CPNS response #10), Shape Health as Partners in Education (SHAPE), IFAC, FAN-Out, and SNAP meetings. As best practices (e.g., Harvest of the Month (HOTM), *5 a Day Campaigns*, and Food Stamp Outreach Resource Kit) are identified, CPNS will also post these resources to the *Network* and partner websites, as appropriate. Management will reinforce communication and sharing of best practices. CPNS will feature program highlights in the CDHS “Week Ahead Reports” and at the local contractors’ CAN-Act meetings to assist in sharing best practices and system improvements between CPNS and the local agency contractors. CPNS will develop case studies for the operation and program integration roles of the RNNs and share these widely.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #5.

**Recommendation #6**

Investigate methods for streamlining reporting and documentation (e.g. consolidating multiple reports, developing an online documentation system) for FSNE at the state and local levels.

**CDHS Response #6:** Especially in view of the increasing federal documentation requirement, CPNS agrees with the need to streamline reporting and documentation systems, forms, and procedures through consolidating multiple reports and developing an online documentation system at the state and local levels. The CPNS management team and the PCRT will review current

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documentation and report requirements (e.g., state and federal/share budget protocols, invoicing, final reports including the USDA Education and Administrative Reporting System (EARS) reporting requirements, if appropriate) and streamline the FFY 08 FAP and align the CPNS final report system Semi-Annual Activity Report (SAAR), a reporting tool for local contractors. In the process, CPNS plans to involve the local agencies through CAN-Act, SHAPE, and pilot testing of the new Communities of Excellence along with key partners, CDSS, UCD, and USDA. This project is the first step towards an overall integration and streamlining of all *Network* reporting requirements. The goal is to coordinate into one report all required data from each funded project, minimize duplication, streamline the information collected, ensure an accurate *Network* database of statewide participants, and serve as a more useful planning tool for Program Managers and local agency contractors. CPNS units have begun identifying areas useful for overall program management and improvement. Staff is classifying items on the SAAR as being essential, needing revision, or possible eliminate.

Contractor progress reports are submitted to CPNS electronically twice a year and hard copy attachments are submitted once a year. CPNS will review the format of these reports to ensure information is not collected unnecessarily.

We are also exploring ways to establish an online reporting system, akin to the online Latino 5 a Day reporting system, which will allow RNN to track their intervention activities and submit their reach reports over the internet.

CPNS is continuing its rollout of the GIFTS database. The system is now tracking all LIAs for FFY 06 and FFY 07. This includes information such as program contacts, budgets, areas served, contract compliance requirements and targeting (such as age groups, ethnicities, language, gender, and regions). The Information Technology Unit staff are working closely with PCRT to ensure that GIFTS is tracking the data necessary to accomplish their mandate as well.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #6 and supports making the streamlining of reporting and documentation procedures a priority.

**Recommendation #7**

If not already established, develop clear standards and criteria for continued state and local contractor participation in FSNE and CNN, delineating steps for resolving unmet Scope of Work (SOW) objectives, reporting and invoicing timelines, etc.

**CDHS Response #7:**

The annual FAP states that continued participation in the *Network* is performance-based and only those contractors with excellent performance are permitted to increase their annual budgets. CPNS will not reimburse local contractors who have not completed all SOW objectives and/or for any non-delivered activities/services. If staff determines a local contractor has a pattern of non-compliance with contract requirements and remedial efforts are not successful, then CPNS will take corrective action. Corrective actions may include: withholding invoice payments, requesting return payments, not renewing a contract, and in cases of continued contract non-compliance, terminating the contract. Staff is currently working on a project that will clearly specify the criteria for terminating contracts for non-compliance and the remedial steps needed prior to terminating the contract. CPNS will complete this project by January 2007.

Regarding the establishment of even higher standards and criteria for continued *Network* participation, for several fiscal years CPNS has put “smart growth” policies in place in order to properly manage FSNE program activities and maintain proper customer service. Agencies (other than local health departments) that want to join the *Network* as LIA’s were placed on a waiting list and food security/food stamp access was considered the priority growth area through the non-profit Incentive Award mechanism. In order to bring on new LIA’s, CPNS intended to tie continued participation to progressively higher expectations associated with duration of funding. Due to the significant modifications and reinterpretations of USDA *Guidance* over the last several years, it has been impossible for CPNS to develop these criteria. Starting in mid-FFY 07, CPNS will engage contractors and partners in developing strategic, peer-driven standards, with the expectation of their becoming effective in FFY 09.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #7 and will work closely with CPNS to clarify expectations for continued growth.

**Recommendation #8**

If not already established, develop procedures and criteria for ensuring that state and local FSNE project activities disseminate accurate nutrition information, founded upon the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guidance System.

**CDHS Response #8:** CDHS has a multi-step process to ensure that local programs provide accurate nutrition information. One step is to develop and provide to the trained *Network* spokespersons lists of core nutrition, programmatic and physical activity messages, and to provide on-going training on the use of this information. Second, CPNS will include a module on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guidance System in the *Network* Orientation Training provided for new staff and new local projects. Third, CPNS will formalize the review procedures using a workgroup of technical staff



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including registered dietitians, health educators, and physical activity specialists, of all materials developed by local agency contractors prior to their finalization. Fourth, CPNS will review staffing plans to determine to degree to which all projects have access to a qualified nutrition specialist and from that, determine whether standards or further support is needed. Finally, the quality control tool developed by the PCRT will contain an element which addresses disseminating accurate nutrition information in live, video, and written formats.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #8.

**Recommendation #9**

Work with contracted umbrella organizations to set up sufficient fiscal systems and a plan for monitoring subcontractor program quality and fiscal integrity (e.g., establish a system for periodic desk reviews of or site visits with subcontractors).

**CDHS Response #9:** CPNS agrees with the recommendation and has experimented and found this approach to be successful with the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) and California Valley Health Network (CVHN). CPNS is exploring similar arrangements with several other entities, (e.g., California First 5, California Department of Education, Center for Collaborative Solution).

CPNS has conducted successful fiscal trainings for CAFB and has scheduled other customized trainings with other umbrella organizations to be completed by January 2007. During FFY 07, state staff will accompany staff from CAFB and CVHN on a sampling of site visits as part of their oversight responsibility. Please also refer to CDHS Corrective Action Responses #1 and #12.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #9.

**Recommendation #10**

Offer to State and local FSNE partners, more opportunities and vehicles for channel-specific and regional-level sharing of best practices, challenges and training on FSNE operational issues. This should include strategies for sharing with local FSNE projects, best practices and resources from CNN's statewide activities.

**CDHS Response #10:** CPNS agrees that the RNN's are gatekeepers for FSNE operations including administration, resources, activity sharing and best practices. Each of the 11 RNNs are required to provide regionalized trainings, implement systems to enhance communications, link local/regional projects (e.g., directory of projects and resources), and host regional in-person sharing forums where LIAs and other projects discuss best/promising practices. Though

RNN startup has taken some time to implement, all RNNs are now fully functioning and ready to meet these deliverables more effectively and in coordination with CPNS. In those regions where there are several channel-specific LIAs, channel-specific trainings are held. For example, the Orange County and Los Angeles RNNs are collaborating with the *Network* Nutrition Education Consultant (NEC) on an upcoming training for the school LIAs in their regions in December 2006 entitled, "Nutrition Education for Parents: Getting to the Next Level." This is a model that CPNS will encourage. In the Bay Area, separate quarterly meetings are held for funded LIAs, regional *5 a Day Campaigns*, and special projects to discuss promising practices, FSNE-related issues, and coordinated messages/activities. In monthly conference calls with the RNNs, and CPNS will include these topics to enhance regional knowledge and sharing. RNN state staff will track change progress reports. Finally, to ensure that CPNS shares state-level resources with regional and local partners, CPNS is developing a standardized "Orientation to the *Network*" presentation (PowerPoint) that will be delivered by the RNNs. CPNS welcomes additional ideas from USDA WRO on this topic.

CAN-Act is a second mechanism to provide work groups, forums, and trainings to FSNE-funded *Network* projects, especially related to challenges in operating FSNE projects and opportunities for streamlining paperwork. CPNS expects this group to also provide an excellent means for convening channel-specific meetings for addressing programmatic and administrative issues systematically.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #10 and also plans to collaborate with CAN-Act as part of our ongoing FSNE activities.

#### **Recommendation #11**

Continue to share strategies on integrating a parental nutrition education component into youth-based FSNE programming, or where appropriate, ensuring that staff connect and work with other local FSNE programs that serve parents and caregivers of students.

**CDHS Response #11:** CPNS adapted a consumer experiment as an integrated strategy and has incorporated a parent component to all youth-based FSNE programming. CPNS will work with RNNs to better link local FSNE programs with one another and to existing resources, as well as provide appropriate regionalized trainings and sharing of best practices. See Recommendation Response #10 above for one example. Statewide, the NEC will work with RNNs and the LIAs in their regions to identify opportunities and strategies for incorporating more parent education components into their youth-based programs.

A third approach for integrating parental nutrition education into youth-based FSNE programming is through the new youth empowerment pilot program. In each of our youth empowerment pilot sites, youth will serve as champions for increasing fruits and vegetables and physical activity within their homes, schools, and community. It is likely that many youth leaders in our pilot sites will assume greater responsibility for cooking, shopping and planning their families' recreation activities. With these young champions acting in partnership with their parents, there is great potential for creating a significant impact on their parents' attitudes, beliefs, practices, and behavior. The *Children's Power Play! Campaign* will incorporate the pilot testing of parent-targeted interventions into its FFY 08 SOW for the RNN. Interventions will be conducted with the *Power Play! Campaign's* school and community youth organization partners, so that both children and parents receive similar messages related to fruits and vegetables and physical activity. The *Latino* and *African American Campaigns* will continue to reach family units with proven nutrition education interventions at festivals, farmers'/flea markets, and grocery stores, which includes collaboration with the *Retail Program* staff. *Campaign* staff will continue to identify ways to improve nutrition education strategies with local programs that serve parents and caregivers of students, primarily through the use of the *Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Toolbox for Community Educators*.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #11.

### **Recommendation #12**

Explore methods and resources for providing family oriented interventions (e.g., offering nutrition promotion activities for children during adult nutrition education classes and events).

**CDHS Response #12:** CPNS agrees to implement this recommendation. During FFY 07, the *Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Campaign* Unit, with the help of "best practices" from funded projects, will develop children's components for the Community Events Manual. This manual is currently used by the *Latino* and *African American Campaigns* for interventions conducted at festivals, farmers'/flea markets, and other community events. The children's components will encourage the incorporation of child-friendly activities at the *Campaign* booth during family-friendly events. CPNS will also make the Community Events Manual available to other *Network*-funded projects via the CPNS website to ensure proven methods and resources are shared with the local projects to use during their family-oriented interventions. In addition, the *Retail Program* will incorporate family-friendly messages and, where appropriate, child-specific components, in its revised merchandising materials, technical assistance tools, and resources for retailers. Many LIA school districts provide

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parent nutrition education opportunities during Back to School Night in the fall and Open House in the spring. In addition, Hawthorne School District sponsors

“Family Nutrition Nights” at a different school site each month, with a variety of nutrition education activities for both parents and children. On December 11, 2006, LIA school districts will participate in training on how to provide effective parent and family nutrition education. This training will include sharing of best practices and resources by Hawthorne and other LIA school districts.

The *Nutrition Network* HOTM tool kit has a family newsletter component providing nutrition education to families, and it also serves as a nutrition education lesson plan for teachers interacting with families and parents. A number of School Readiness centers are using the HOTM family newsletter component as a lesson plan to provide nutrition education to parents of preschool-age children in Southern California. The Readiness Centers have had the family newsletter translated into Spanish and Vietnamese to meet their specific target audience needs.

Through the *Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Campaigns*, adult-targeted nutrition education is conducted through direct health service providers, community-based organizations, and faith organizations using the *Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Toolbox* and *Body and Soul* materials. Adults typically participate in these interventions independently of their children to facilitate improved learning for the adult and ensure appropriate targeting. In some situations, the participants' children take part in separate interventions, while their parents attend their classes. In these cases, the *Campaign* will encourage the use of existing child-targeted materials, such as the *Children's Power Play! Campaign* materials, HOTM materials, or other appropriate materials recommended by the California Healthy Kids Resource Center to ensure consistent messaging to both parents and their children.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #12.

**Recommendation #13**

Work with local FSNE partners to develop program objectives related to administration and oversight systems, sustainability, etc.

**CDHS Response #13:** CPNS will review required SOW objectives and work with local partners to strengthen those objectives on administration and oversight. CPNS is executing a contract through the FFY 07 Plan with CAN-Act to:

- 1) Develop standardized objectives, SOW language, and budgets that can be localized by *Network* contractors prior to the release in February 2007 of the FAP;

- 2) Improve communication between and among state agency and local contractors by conducting a series of regional roundtable discussions addressing programmatic, administrative, fiscal, and sustainability issues from January – March 2007 and
- 3) Conduct three technical assistance sessions with state staff on the FAP prior to March 2007.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #13.

**Recommendation #14**

Work with each CNN unit to look at how sustainability can be addressed for State and local FSNE efforts, adopting best practices from other units that have begun to address this, where appropriate.

**CDHS Response #14:** CPNS partners have demonstrated sustainability in multiple ways. Most notable is the growth in state-share, which reflects significant new investment in FSNE-allowable services throughout California. Other examples are that popular FSNE-initiated activities or services have been viewed as/proven effective, then are adopted or supported through redirection of funds within an agency; new funding sources have been identified, such as grants, donations or fees; other organizations have adopted the activity or service, thereby freeing the originating agency's resources; environmental and systems changes have become self-supporting; and new policies have been implemented without requiring new resources.

CPNS will continue to offer sustainability training, share tools developed by others, and help identify successful practices of *Network* partners. Specifically, the *Network* campaigns will continue to promote sustainability by training both FSNE and non-FSNE funded projects on use of Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Toolbox to enable other agencies serving the targeted populations to foster FSNE activities. Units within CPNS will support future sustainability by assisting local projects in documenting effectiveness in their nutrition education interventions and by developing partnerships with organizations/people that will reinforce and promote the section's nutrition messaging.

CPNS continues to develop strategic partnerships through the joint Steering Committee, Regional Collaboratives, and other leadership projects with industry, government, and community-based organizations that can help advance the common goals and allow leveraging of resources and interventions for maximum impact. CPNS has forged more than 400 partnerships, including those with CDSS' Food Stamp Bureau, the California Department of Education's Office of

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Nutrition Services, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture that expand FSNE-related activities beyond those receiving federal food support.

CPNS will continue to work with the other state departments listed above to seek General Fund support through Budget Change Proposals. CPNS will continue to explore the possibility of private sector and other federal funding.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #14.

**Recommendation #15**

Enhance CNN's current evaluation design to include a more standardized system of capturing both community-based and individual-level indicators, additional behavioral change areas and representative outcomes from train-the-trainer interventions.

**CDHS Response #15:** CPNS has adopted a multi-faceted approach to continually strengthening evaluation activities and design. Key elements include:

- 1) increased implementation by more county health departments of a multi-element, standardized evaluation measure evaluating community-based indicators of healthy eating, physical activity opportunities, and obesity prevention;
- 2) steady growth in the number of contractors participating in standardized outcome/impact evaluation of individual-level indicators using validated instruments, along with compilation of aggregated data;
- 3) development of more finely tuned instruments for individual assessment of general nutrition change specifically for purposes of evaluating CPNS interventions in our targeted populations based on validated instruments;
- 4) incorporation of tracking into train-the-trainer activities to follow-up results of training; and
- 5) conduction of an externally-funded study to gather feedback from experts in the field of evaluation on the *Network's* current evaluation system and suggestions for strengthening it in the future.

The following provides more implementation details on the five strategies:

1. **Increased implementation of a more standardized system for capturing community-based indicators:** The CX<sup>3</sup> Project began in FFY 05. It used expert panel rating and review to develop a set of standardized community-based indicators of increased access and availability to healthy foods in general, fruits and vegetables, physical activity opportunities, and

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other obesity prevention-related measures, including contributors from all California USDA programs as well as national experts. During FFY 06, the indicators have been put into operation in a series of geographic mapping

and community-based data collection elements. They are being pilot tested by six local health departments. During FFY 07 and due to partner interest, they will be tested by six to eight more health departments. It is hoped that during FFY 07, it will also be possible to begin developing instruments and conducting pilot testing within the school channel, the *Network's* largest "community."

- 2. Steady growth in the number of contractors participating in standardized outcome/impact evaluation of individual-level indicators using validated instruments:** A standardized system for capturing individual-level indicators is in its third year and is showing real progress; we expect this to continue to grow and improve. The *Network* began to conduct outcome/impact evaluation in FFY 04. Most contractors used standardized pre-and post-tests to measure change in fruit and vegetable intake and/or factors strongly related to fruit and vegetable intake. Contractors are provided with annual training opportunities, an evaluation manual, and a set of validated instruments by our Evaluation Specialist. During FFY 04, 12 contractors participated compared to 24 and 47 in FFY 05 and FFY 06, respectively. In FFY 04-06, the *Network* required contractors receiving over \$350,000 to conduct impact evaluation. In FFY 06 all (n=39) of the obligated contractors conducted impact evaluation vs. 66 percent (of 36) in FFY 05. In FFY 06, fruit and vegetable consumption was measured by 22 contractors compared to seven in FFY 05 and one in FFY 04. A new instrument, based on other validated instruments was developed during FFY 06 for projects using the *Network*-developed HOMET materials. Eleven contractors administered the same survey to a total of 1,471 youth. This standard instrument will allow the *Network* to assess impact for multiple agencies in four regions this year, and it is anticipated it will be even more widely used in the future.
- 3. Identifying standardized, validated instruments to measure additional behavioral change areas:** A *Network*-funded project completed in FFY 06 will enable us to provide contractors with an illustrated version of the Townsend Food Behavior Checklist (FBC). The FBC quickly assesses fruit/vegetable behavior, consumption of milk and high sugar beverages, consumption of lean fish and poultry, and general positive dietary behaviors such as nutrition label reading. FBC was developed and validated particularly for low-income, low-literacy Californian adults. In FFY 2007, CPNS will modify the instrument to be suitable for low-accultured Spanish-speaking Californians, translated, and validated for that population.
- 4. Incorporating more tracking into train-the-trainer activities:** CPNS has initiated discussion of train-the-trainer evaluation strategies with the

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Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program and plans to talk with UCD and other national organizations that provide similar trainings (e.g., National Food Service Management Institute) to determine state-of-the-art thinking and practice about the type and extent of follow-up that is practical and cost effective for train-the-trainer activities targeting professionals and targeting community workers.

**5. Overall guidance in evaluation system design from experts in the field:**

An FFY 06–FFY 07 project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will enable CPNS to discuss its current evaluation practices with leading experts in the field of evaluation at various levels of the Social Ecological Model, particularly the outer spheres, such as institutional and community.

A structured interview, plus a group interactive session will provide experts with the opportunity to provide guidance to CPNS on improving evaluation practices in the future. This grant was secured two years ago, but other workload has precluded its implementation.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #15.

**Recommendation #16**

Continue to improve coordination of services with UCCE and share examples of such successful partnerships at the local level.

**CDHS Response #16:** CPNS generally agrees with this recommendation. In coordination with CDSS, CPNS will meet with UCD to address coordination of services at common schools. In most cases where overlap occurs, the *Network* and UCD are targeting different grades or using different materials to reinforce similar messages. The *Network Power Play! Campaign's* School Idea and Resource Kits are on the approved materials list for the UCD programs. Many of UCD's counties promote the *Network* School Kit to fourth and fifth grade teachers, while promoting Reading Across MyPyramid to the lower elementary grades and HOMT to the entire school.

State-level and regional staff will continue to encourage coordination and foster relationships to help facilitate sharing of best practices and conduct periodic meetings with UCD FSNEP staff to better coordinate efforts.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #16 and is committed to assisting CPNS and UC-FSNEP with improving coordination.

**Recommendation #17**

Work with State and local partners to enhance partnerships between local FSNE organizations and local social services offices.



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**CPNS Response #17:** In collaboration with CDSS and UCD, CPNS will work with the RNNs and local social service offices to encourage stronger linkages and partnerships via the Food Stamp Office Resource Kit (FSORK). The RNNs

are required to work with *Network*-funded projects, UCD, local food stamp offices, and others to implement a plan to link FSNE with food stamp offices and other emergency food organizations. This activity was somewhat hampered during the last year due to restrictions and confusion about how to assist in promoting food stamps, and by resistance from some local food stamp offices. The situation is improving as the issues are discussed and clarified and the opportunities for relationships are increased as a result of the FSORK. The RNNs are eager to assist.

Based on a similar approach that was taken during the development of the kit, CPNS and UCD staff will schedule time at our upcoming meeting of the California Welfare Directors Association Food Stamp Committee to discuss options, and how the food stamp directors who are not yet linked with the *Network* or UCD would like to begin establishing partnerships. This meeting is attended by approximately 40 of the 52 county food stamp directors in California.

In addition, there are some strong successful partnerships, such as in the San Diego and Imperial region where the RNN and local social service directors meet monthly, with RNN providing nutrition education information and materials. In the Los Angeles region, staff from the food stamp offices are regularly participating in the various programs and events delivered by the FSNE efforts. The community development team will also continue to encourage LIAs to invite social service outreach workers to nutrition education events reaching the FSNE-eligible population in order to strengthen the food stamp information provided. While these invitations are often declined, the LIAs have been persistent and, as a result of their continued efforts, significant inroads to partnerships have resulted in both the Bay Area and the central coast.

The RNN Project Directors will continue to be encouraged to participate in the local food and nutrition education project quarterly meetings (formally food security), as these meetings provide increased exposure to existing programs, problems, and opportunities in these sites. This has improved our programs' partnership approach and nutrition education program offerings so that it is better suited to their needs and abilities. As a result of the RNN participation in this meeting, there has also been a reciprocal involvement by these contractors in the Regional Collaboratives. Their participation in these collaboratives has resulted in increased exposure to the issues faced by this segment of services, as well as increased opportunities for partnerships to provide nutrition education programming at food distribution sites.

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Finally, it is anticipated that with the passage of AB 2384, recently signed into law, CDHS will be working with multiple counties interested in being part of the pilot project's "Healthy Purchase".

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #17 and is committed to ensuring that CWDs have information regarding the FSNE services that CPNS and UC-FSNEP can provide. The FSORK has been well received by CWDs. CDSS has served as a contact point for questions that have arisen and has been an active liaison with the CWDs. The use of the FSORK will continue to be promoted and encouraged. The development of the FSORK was a great cooperative effort that will be continued.

**Recommendation #18**

Work with local projects in diverse geographic areas to ensure that they are able, within reason, to serve minority groups and non-English speaking families. The sharing of successes and resources from CNN's state-level campaigns would be beneficial to this end.

**CDHS Response #18:** CPNS agrees with the recommendation. The *Fruit, Vegetable, and Physical Activity Campaigns* are systematically reviewing the partnerships and communications between RNN *Campaign* staff and other *Network*-funded projects within each region. Through this review, the state-level staff will identify strengths, areas for improvement, and action items for each region. Action items will include ensuring that all *Network*-funded projects serving minority groups and non-English speaking families are aware of the resources, training, and technical assistance available to them through the RNNs. In addition, the *Campaign* is developing case studies that will be shared with the local projects and posted on the CPNS website, demonstrating successful regional *Campaign* activities that can be adopted and or adapted at the local level. The formative research conducted with Asian/Pacific Islanders, including Chinese, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Korean populations, will be made available via the website as well.

CPNS online ordering system was expanded to include all *Network*-funded projects and allocates materials to each individual site. The revised system will aid in increasing awareness and availability of the various materials that CPNS has developed for minority and non-English speaking families. Funded projects will be able to order many materials directly through the online ordering system.

Additional materials are available to contractors and partners through their RNNs. By making some materials accessible only through the RNNs, the projects are encouraged to build relationships that extend beyond the exchange of materials and include technical assistance and coordinated activities. The Communications Unit is working to determine whether those materials available

through the RNNs can be viewed by all contractors on the online ordering system, with a notation about how to obtain them. This would help to increase awareness of materials available for minority and non-English speaking families, including those available for Spanish speakers, as well as any newly created or adopted materials developed in Asian/Pacific Islander languages.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #18.

**Recommendation #19**

Ensure that local projects are aware of United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition education materials available for their use and encourage them to submit newly developed materials for inclusion in the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection online resource database. The submission form may be accessed online at: [http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodstamp/Library/sharing\\_part1-2.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodstamp/Library/sharing_part1-2.html).

**CDHS Response #19:** CPNS does not encourage the development of new materials by local contractors, and as more resources are produced at the state level, we have noticed local agencies developing fewer materials. Instead, they are able to adapt or use previously-developed materials from CPNS or other agencies for their interventions.

CPNS has taken the following steps to assure that local projects are aware of USDA nutrition education materials:

- 1) provided a link from the CPNS website to the USDA website to facilitate easy access to USDA nutrition education materials;
- 2) described the USDA website in the FFY 07 Funding Announcement Packet documents (February 2006);
- 3) included information about the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection (FSNC), the online resource database, and the California Healthy Kids Resource Center which maintains a comprehensive collection of peer-reviewed health education materials targeting preschool through grade 12;
- 4) included a listing of USDA materials in the current LIA Guidelines Manual (last revision, September 2003); and
- 5) addressed CPNS' policies regarding contractor-developed nutrition education materials in a May 2005 CPNS Program Letter to local agencies

In addition to the above, CPNS plans to:

- 1) send a Program Letter to local contractors during FFY 07 reinforcing USDA WRO recommendations regarding nutrition education materials from the

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program review and a revised *Network* Educational/Promotional Materials Review Form which will encourage submission to FSNC;

- 2) audit specific nutrition education materials presently used by each agency in the FFY 08 Project Summary documents and at agency site visits; and
- 3) include a listing of all USDA, CPNS and other current and accurate nutrition education materials for quick reference by Program Managers providing technical assistance to local agencies in the LIA Program Manager Desk Manual scheduled for completion in the second quarter of FFY 07 and continue to recommend appropriate USDA materials regularly to local agencies during Regional NEC site visits, workshops and trainings

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #19.

**Recommendation #20**

Ensure that FSNE educators are mindful of factors that will facilitate learning and maintaining audience attention (e.g. for elderly audiences, utilize materials in large print and a portable microphone; for classroom latecomers, ensure the educator includes them in FSNE activities and discussions; emphasize hands-on student participation versus lecture-style nutrition education).

**CDHS Response #20:** Program staff conducting site visits will provide technical assistance to contractors on the above learning strategies. Sharing effective program delivery techniques is an ongoing focus of SHAPE meetings which involve *Network* school districts, county offices of education, and contractors working with schools. Additionally, the California Healthy Kids Resource Center began training CPNS and *Network* field staff on increasing skills density of nutrition instruction – targeting student behavior during FFY 06 second quarter and will continue through FFY 07. This training is geared to sharpen teaching and training skills, gain tools for identifying, selecting, and implementing more effective nutrition education, and learn about resources for guiding *Network* agencies to bring about positive behavior change.

CPNS will also incorporate the above recommendation into the FFY 08 SOW instructions distributed in FFY 07 second quarter, SOW negotiations in FFY 07 second and third quarter, and FFY 07 contractor trainings.

**CDSS RESPONSE:** CDSS concurs with the CDHS response to Recommendation #20.